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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. ALLARD].

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
November 29, 1995.

I hereby designate the Honorable WAYNE ALLARD to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Rev. James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

Gracious God, from whom we have come and to whom we shall return, we pray for fortitude in our personal lives that our actions will blend with our words and our words will harmonize with our prayers. May we express in our lives an authenticity of spirit that resists the pressures that come from a complicated world and conflicting loyalties. Remind us each day, O God, to follow the road that leads to justice for every person and to hear anew Your words of reconciliation and peace. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr.

PALLONE] come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. PALLONE led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Edwin Thomas, one of his secretaries.

WHAT DOES A BALANCED BUDGET MEAN TO THE AVERAGE CITIZEN?

(Mr. HORN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, during the next 2 weeks we will make the most serious attempt at balancing the budget that we have had in the last three decades. An average citizen probably says, "What is in it for me? So what if you balance the budget? I am doing OK in many ways." Here is what is in it. It is not just balancing the budget, it is doing fair and compassionate spending levels to meet the basic needs of this country as we have in saving Medicare.

What is in it for the average citizen was well said by Mr. Greenspan, Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, in testimony before a committee of the Senate yesterday. What he said several months ago was in essence; if we can balance the budget, interest rates in America will be reduced 2 percent for the average mortgage on a house, for the average consumer loan, for the average automobile loan.

To summarize, here is what he said yesterday on the subject. It is something we should realize, that if we continue this commitment that we have to balance the budget, we will have the

story of a prolonged growth in our economy versus a spurt that might not last. This is important to get this economy going.

We will keep that commitment to balance the budget, Mr. Speaker. We will keep that commitment.

PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, right now the budget negotiations have begun, and I was very pleased to see that President Clinton over the last few weeks specifically identified the environment and protection of the environment as one of the key issues or one of the key priorities that must be maintained and strengthened during these budget negotiations.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we have an opportunity to vote on the appropriations conference report that contains the budget for the EPA. Unfortunately, inconsistent with the President's priorities and concern for the environment, this Republican leadership measure would actually reduce funding for the EPA, the Environmental Protection Agency, by 21 percent over last year. And specifically for enforcement, the amount of money that is appropriated is even less; and for the Superfund Program, very important to my State and many parts of the country, the funding is reduced by 19 percent.

The President has already said that he intends to veto the EPA appropriations bill, and well he should.

THE REPUBLICANS WILL BALANCE THE BUDGET

(Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, the last 11 months here in the House have been an object lesson on keeping promises. At least on this side of the aisle. Last year, Republicans promised the American people that if we were given a majority here in the House, we would put all our energies into balancing the budget—something that Democrats failed to do even though they had the Presidency, and control of Congress.

Republicans made a commitment in the Contract With America and we kept that commitment. We passed a balanced budget. Even our opposition and liberal news media know that we are doing the right thing for America's economy and America's children.

Mr. Speaker, over 3 years ago, Bill Clinton said he would present a balanced budget. He never did. The American people deserve more than self-promoting politicians who promise, but never deliver. And that is why they voted for a Republican majority. We are doing what we said we would do, and we will balance the budget.

REPUBLICANS ARE SINGING THE SAME OLD SONGS ON THE BUDGET

(Mr. GUTIERREZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, we keep hearing the same old songs in this House.

It wasn't long ago that many of my Republican colleagues were singing the gospel of Voodoo Economics—that tax cuts for the rich and more money for defense that would magically add up to lower deficits.

The result?

A budget deficit that more than quadrupled during the 12 years Ronald Reagan and George Bush ran our Nation.

But now, many of my colleagues who stood in this Chamber and voted for 12 years to burden working Americans with 300 billion dollars' worth of deficits and now singing loudly in the choir of fiscal responsibility again.

They have a plan for getting our deficit under control.

But it is the same old song, with a new twist.

Tax cuts for the wealthy, more money for defense and devastating cuts in education, Medicare, and the programs that most American rely on every day.

I think it is time to change our tune to supporting a responsible budget that puts our children, our students, our families, and our seniors first.

My Republican friends might not know the words, but that would be a song that more working Americans could sing along to.

AMERICANS WORK HARD FOR THEIR MONEY AND OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO KEEP MORE OF IT

(Mr. HAYWORTH asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of personal affection for the gentleman who preceded me here in the well, but the simple fact is when you talk about genuine cuts, about the only real cut we have seen is my good friend, the gentleman from Illinois, shaving off his trademark mustache.

The fact is, for all the venom and vitriol about incredible cuts and draconian measures taking place, that simply is not the case. Rather, we are slowing the rate of growth of Government. To my friend who says, Mr. Speaker, that we are affecting seniors and students and families, I say he is right; we are affecting them in a positive way. We are making sure that the American people hang onto more of their hard-earned money. Indeed the tax cut, the \$500 per child tax credit, goes to help 80 percent of families in this country.

Certainly there is a problem with facts and rhetoric. The fact is we are helping working Americans by this very simple premise: They work hard for the money they earn, they ought to keep more of it and send less of it to the Federal Government here in Washington, DC.

THE CONSTITUTION CALLS FOR THE SEPARATION OF CHURCH FROM STATE, BUT NOT OF GOD FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, Brittney Settle, a Tennessee ninth grader, wrote a paper about Jesus Christ. The teacher flunked her. The teacher said Jesus Christ is not an appropriate topic for a public school.

Appropriate? Other students are allowed to write about devil worship, reincarnation, the whole gamut; witchcraft. The Supreme Court, by the way, says Jesus Christ is not an appropriate topic. They sided with the school.

Mr. Speaker, is there any wonder our schools are so screwed up when the only time you can hear God's name is when it is taken in vain? Wake up, Congress. The Constitution may separate church and State, but the Constitution never intended to separate God and the American people. In God we trust. It would not be all over our buildings and all over our currency. Something is wrong in our public schools when the only time you can hear God's name legally is when it is taken in vain. Let us take a look at some issues here, Congress.

THE PRESIDENT NEEDS A PLAN TO BALANCE THE BUDGET

(Mr. BALLENGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, last week the Republican leadership here in Congress sent a letter to the President asking for specifics on exactly how the Clinton administration would balance the budget in 7 years as they agreed to do on November 19.

This is what the administration sent back—a set of talking points. No specifics, no numbers.

In his talking points, the President had the unmitigated gall to ask that Congress provide a legislative plan. Well excuse me, but it seems we have already passed the Balanced Budget Act of 1995. In that we spell out exactly how we will balance the budget in 7 years, including numbers, amounts, and specifics.

Mr. Speaker, it is understandable that the Clinton administration would have a problem with specifics. It already had huge problem keeping promises. The President totally lacks any plan to balance the budget with honest numbers. Without a plan, really, all they can do is provide talking points, and, of course, more hot air.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HEALTH EQUITY ACT

(Ms. VELÁZQUEZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, today I will introduce the Health Equity Act legislation that will address the problem of environmental discrimination.

Mr. Speaker, there is a growing recognition that people in poor and working class communities, and particularly people of color, are forced to live and work in areas contaminated by opportunistic polluters that target these communities. Whether it is in the form of incinerators, industrial production facilities, pesticides, or radiation—exposure to such contamination represents a death sentence for black and Latino Americans throughout this country.

My legislation, which applies title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act to the Federal environmental regulatory process, will allow minority communities to halt potentially dangerous action, before harm comes to them. Our society has slowly taken steps to end the burden of discrimination in areas ranging from employment to housing. This will give communities of color a chance to fight against this form of discrimination.

I would encourage my colleagues to cosponsor this legislation and help end one of the most neglected forms of discrimination in America.

BALANCING THE FEDERAL BUDGET AND HOPE

(Mrs. KELLY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)